

Linlithgow and District Allotment



April 2022 Society Newsletter

Committee Members:

Val Corry (plot 31)
(Chair)

Fenella Duncan (plot 7)
(Secretary)

Claire Metivier (plot 3)
(Infrastructure)

Margaret Mundie (plot
65 & 84) (Deputy Chair)

Alan Nicoll (plot 19)
(Support for
Membership Secretary)

Suzanne Ralston (plot
67) (Membership
Secretary)

Lynne Stanford (plot 25)
(Treasurer)

Neil Valentine (plot 78)
(Maintenance)

Nicola Waddell (plot 58)

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This is my first newsletter as Chair and I want to begin by thanking Paul Taylor, our outgoing Chair, for all that he achieved. He worked tirelessly to make the running of the society as smooth as possible and was always keen to make sure that plot holders were kept well informed and had all that they needed to enjoy growing and working at Oakwell. He also was an excellent Chair to the Committee who benefitted from his leadership.

I also want to thank committee members who also work voluntarily behind the scenes to keep LADAS running. Margaret Mundie has recently stepped down as Treasurer as her term of office came to an end and Lynne Stanford has taken over. Margaret has taken on the role of Deputy Chair. Many thanks Margaret. Margaret has been an excellent Treasurer and has supported Lynne in her new role. Fenella Duncan has just recently returned to the Committee as Secretary, taking over from Nicola Waddell. Thank you Nicola for the time you gave. Suzanne Ralston continues as Membership Secretary and is the point of contact for new plot holders. Suzanne does a brilliant job meeting prospective plot holders and makes sure they have all the information they need to begin work on their plot. Suzanne is supported by Alan Nicoll. LADAS would not be such an attractive place to be without Neil Valentine who keeps the grass cut, ensures the hedges are maintained and is currently working on plans with Claire Metivier on upgrading the car park and the main path. These two areas have not had much attention since LADAS opened in 2011. Neil and Alison Valentine also give their time to ensure plot holders can benefit from a wide selection of high quality and competitively priced seed potatoes. (Alison also deserves thanks as she served on the Committee until recently and continues to give of her time for the benefit of LADAS). And finally thanks to Tom Byrne who stepped down last year. There are a range of other activities that the Committee do e.g. ensuring plots are well tended and cultivated, organising hut and toilet cleaning, running events such as the harvest festival, potato days (COVID permitting) etc.

I have listed the Committee members at the side with plot numbers. Committee members are always willing to help anyone with any questions about growing or anything to do with LADAS. Just seek us out and ask. You can also always contact us on linlithgowallotments@yahoo.org.uk

I also want to thank all those who are not on the Committee but are willing to volunteer when we have tasks to do on the site. Without your help running a large site like Oakwell would be onerous. There will be some teams needed as we work on the car park and path. Even if you only have half an hour to spare we would value your help. We will be sending out information to you all when the plans are finalised.

We want all plot holders to enjoy growing and just spending time at Oakwell. It is a beautiful setting and we all benefit both physically and mentally from the opportunity to grow our own fruit, vegetables and flowers. It is also a community that we value and as we move on from the restrictions that COVID forced upon us, we are hoping to increase the events for us to grow as a community.

Welcome to new plot holders

We have five plots that have changed hands in the last few weeks and I want to welcome all of our new plot holders to LADAS.

Wilson and Heather Hendry (plot 17)

Chris and Lesley Nock (plot 33)

Alex and Carole Gourlay (plot 66)

Morven Campbell and Calum Jervis (plot 68b)

Maureen and Michael Sellers (plot 74)

Sally McIntosh (plot 82)

What to do on your plot in April

We have had the luxury of a beautiful few sunny, warm, still days in March and now we are faced with protecting early-sown crops because of the cold snap we are experiencing at the beginning of April. I for one have been lured into planting out my first earlies, and shallots and broad beans I began in modules in the greenhouse. I have protected the broad beans and shallots with netting and the potatoes with fleece. Always keep an eye on the weather and be guided by it as to when to sow or plant crops outside; our Spring definitely starts a few weeks later than further south. On average, the date for the last frost in the Linlithgow area is during the second week of May but may be earlier or later than this. Here is some guidance for what to sow and plant during April:

- Start sowing spring onions and lettuce outside early this month.
- You can also sow maincrop onions directly into the soil from the first week of April when the soil has warmed up a bit. Thin the seedlings to 4 inches (10cm) apart and keep them weed-free
- Feed asparagus with fish, blood and bone fertiliser early in April.
- Broad beans sown indoors earlier can be planted out in the first week of April after hardening off.
- Harden off summer cauliflower and plant out in early April. Cauliflower is a hungry crop so start feeding weekly with a nitrogen

Useful webpage of the month:

Advice for veg growers on what to choose to grow - from RHS (Royal Horticultural Society):

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/Advice/Beginners-Guide/Allotment-basics/Choose-your-crops>

rich fertiliser from the last week of the month and make sure that the plants never dry out

- Plant potatoes this month. If you want to get bigger tubers for baked potatoes rub off all but two or three eyes (sprouts, chits) of maincrop seed potatoes.
- Sow peas outside if you can protect them from mice and voles. On our allotment it is best to start them off indoors and plant them out when the plants are about six inches (15cm) tall.
- Sow winter cabbage and savoys under cover for transplanting later.
- Sow radish, beetroot and spinach under cloches or horticultural fleece in the middle of the month.
- Towards the middle of the month harden off kohlrabi, Summer cabbage and brussels sprouts sown inside earlier for planting out in week 4.
- Plant onion and shallot sets in the middle of April.
- Sow purple sprouting broccoli and kale inside towards the end of the month.
- In week 4 harden off shallot, onion and leek seedlings sown inside earlier for planting out in May. If you plant out allium seedlings too early while there is still a chance of frost the leeks and onions will tend to bolt as, being biennial plants, they are fooled into thinking they have overwintered.
- Feed raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries and blackcurrants with blood, fish and bone fertiliser this month. After feeding mulch the plants with well-rotted manure or compost.
- Sow courgette, pumpkin, squash and cucumber inside at the end of April for planting out after the last frost.
- Towards the end of the month pot on tomato plants into their final containers or growbags. Pinch outside shoots as they appear on cordon varieties.
- Keep on top of the weeding, ensuring that you hoe the weeds down before they start to flower. Remember the old saying, "One year's seeding makes seven years' weeding".

Suggestions

We are always keen to hear from plot holders with any suggestions or ideas you have to improve the site and particularly to foster our community of growers. Just contact us on

linlithgowallotments@yahoo.org.uk or speak to one of the Committee.

Happy growing!

Val Corry (Chair)